



Senator Richard Alarcón

News from the 20th District

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End of Session Report

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Alarcón's Bills to 'Save Our Hospitals' Headed for Governor's Desk



Golden Hour Bill Can Raise \$100 Million to Save Hospitals and Emergency Rooms Without Raising Taxes

(Sacramento, CA) The "Golden Hour" bill authored by Senator Richard Alarcon (D-Van Nuys) has passed the final vote of the California State Legislature and is now headed for Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's desk. The Senate passed the bill by a vote of 23-15 in a concurrence vote late on September 7, 2005. The legislation is designed to raise about \$100 Million annually to help keep hospital emergency rooms and trauma centers from closing, without raising taxes.

Alarcon says, "Lives are literally at stake. In Los Angeles, for example, patients being rushed to their care are rerouted 25% of the time due to the lack of available trauma center and emergency room beds. In many cases, my legislation can help avoid the waste of precious life-saving moments. I urge Governor Schwarzenegger to sign my bill and help us save our hospitals and trauma centers."

SB 57 will raise approximately 100 million dollars annually -without raising taxes- by allowing counties to increase fees for the current penalties for traffic and criminal violations. An increase of just \$20 to \$40 on the average \$320 ticket for a serious -often accident causing- offense, would raise about \$100 million dollars every year.

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Hospital Closures: Early Warning Bill Passes Law Gives Public More Time to Save Hospitals

(Sacramento) Senator Richard Alarcón's "Hospital Closures Early Warning" bill which is designed to help keep hospitals open, passed its final vote in the Senate by a vote of 21-14 on August 22, 2005. SB 499 is now on the Governor's desk. SB 499 is intended to provide more timely information to help local communities organize to **stop the planned closure** of their hospitals **organize a plan to provide other health care options to their community**. The "Hospital Closures Early Warning" bill requires company or organization that is planning to close a hospital or emergency room to do the following:

- prepare a public health and safety report detailing the effects of the possible closure,
- submit the report to the county supervisors and the local emergency medical services agency, and
- make the report available to the public.

In this way, communities who may be considering a hospital bail-out or purchase will have a more accurate picture of the hospital's finances. The community and its leaders will also have a better understanding of the impact the

Please see Hospital Closures Early Warning on page 3

Helping Prevent Life Threatening Diseases

By Senator Richard Alarcón

As a father of four, I know that few things are as important to a parent as the health of their children. Conversely, many of us switch roles when our parents reach a fragile age and provide loving care and support for our elderly parents. That's why I wanted to pass along an important reminder.



"Despite astonishing medical advances, 30,000 adult deaths are caused by vaccine-preventable diseases. In fact, Influenza and pneumonia combined are the fifth leading cause of death in older Americans."

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Every year it's important to remind parents of school-aged children to be sure that their child's vaccines are updated since the immunizations are required for school registration. But it's also important to remind the elderly and those who help care for them, that the Fall is a good time to plan for booster immunizations and vaccines from diseases that are prevalent in the cooler months.

Despite astonishing medical advances, 30,000 adult deaths are caused by vaccine-preventable diseases. In fact, Influenza and pneumonia combined are the fifth leading cause of death in older Americans. But it doesn't have to be this way.

Immunizations are one of the most significant public health achievements of the 20th century. Vaccines have eradicated small pox, eliminated the polio virus in the U.S. and significantly reduced the number of cases of measles, diphtheria, rubella, pertussis and other diseases.

Still, because children are particularly vulnerable to infection, most vaccines are given during the first six years of life. **That's why I'm inviting parents to bring their children to receive free immunizations and eye and ear exams on Saturday, October 1, 10am to 1pm at Beachy Elementary School, 9757 Beachy Avenue in Arleta.** The children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian over 18 years of age and the parent must bring the child's immunization records. For more information about the Free immunizations and eye and ear exams, please call my district office at (818) 901-5588.

Caregivers for the elderly can get more information about boosters and other immunizations from the National Partnership for Immunization web site at www.partnersforimmunization.org.

Please remind you co-workers, friends and neighbors about the importance of immunizing individuals of all ages. Together we can prevent many serious, life threatening diseases.

Free Immunizations and Eye and Ear Exams Offered

Saturday, Oct.1, 2005 * 10 am-1pm

Beachy Elementary School * 9757 Beachy Avenue, Arleta

An adult parent or legal guardian must accompany the children.

Please bring the child's immunization records. Information - (818) 901-5588

Senator Alarcón's Wall of Honor



Woman of the Year:

Soledad Alatorre with Senator Alarcón after receiving her award in the Senate Chambers.

Union Organizer and DWP Ratepayer Plaintiff Feted

(Sacramento, CA) Soledad Alatorre was honored on the floor of the California State Senate as District 20's Woman of the Year.

Ms. Alatorre is best known as the co-founder of Hermandad Mexicana Nacional, and its successor organization, Hermandad Mexicana Latino-Americana. A former trade union organizer, Soledad has dedicated her life to protecting the rights of workers and improving the lives of immigrant workers and their families through advocacy, education and citizenship training. Ms. Alatorre was also one of the ratepayer plaintiffs who sued the City of Los Angeles and the Department of Water and Power for increasing the water rates and then taking the money raised by that increase to pay for other city expenses. Ms. Alatorre lives in Pacoima.

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To insure that these added penalties don't disproportionately hurt the poor, there are already safeguards that allow judges to soften the penalties for those who can't pay and can prove economic hardships.

As many as 70 California Hospitals with emergency services have closed in the last fifteen years. It is generally accepted by the healthcare community that the survival chances are greatly increased for patients who get from injury to care within the first, "Golden Hour." Within those first 60 minutes, police must be notified, an ambulance must be dispatched, the victim must be transported, the appropriate surgical and support staff must be gathered and the life-saving surgery must be performed.

Alarcón adds, "This bill is about saving lives. While the debate continues over how to solve our nation's healthcare crisis in general, it has become increasingly clear that the lives of more trauma patients in California will be at risk daily. We must act now. We in the legislature have acted. The Governor must finish this job with the stroke of his pen."

Alarcón, who's own son died as a result of a traffic accident 18 years ago, also added a stipulation that 15% of the money collected from my legislation will go to fund pediatric specific trauma care units.

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proposed closure will have on their residents.

"My legislation will empower communities in Los Angeles and all across California, to step in and save their hospitals and emergency rooms. Right now, by the time a community finds out that their hospital is closing, it's usually too late for the residents or the local government to do anything about it. If the Governor signs this bill, communities will get an earlier warning and they'll be able to organize either to run the hospital themselves or seek other alternatives for their health care."

The issue is especially crucial in Los Angeles. In the last fifteen years, 70 California hospitals have closed, 11 in the Los Angeles area alone. One of the most recent was the Northridge Hospital in the 20th Senate District.

Senator Alarcón is also the author of SB 57, the "Golden Hour" bill which would raise approximately \$100 Million a year for hospital trauma centers without raising taxes. SB 57 allows counties to raise money for hospitals by collecting an estimated \$20-\$40 increase on an average \$320 ticket for criminal offenses and dangerous moving violations.

Senator Alarcón's Contact Information

Please contact us. We look forward to hearing from you.

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Useful Tips



Help Clear the Air & Reduce Your High Gasoline Costs

Fall can be one of the worst seasons for air pollution in the San Fernando Valley. While the summer's seasonal visitors are a shot of vitality to our economy, the after effects of the added traffic congestion coupled with the residual smoke from the brush fire season can cause unhealthy air. But as a proud resident, there are **steps you can take to lessen pollution while also freeing your wallet from increasingly high gas prices**. Here's a list of transportation alternatives you may enjoy:

➤ **Go Metro** - Contact: www.metro.net or 1-800-COMMUTE

For just \$3—about the cost of one gallon of gas—you can get a **Day Pass** and travel throughout Los Angeles County. You can access:

- over 200 Local and Rapid (Express) bus lines (including 60 new bus lines,)
- 73 miles of Metro Rail service throughout L.A. County.
- later this year, the new 14-mile San Fernando Valley Metro Orange Line will also connect Warner Center with the North Hollywood Metro Rail station.

➤ **Take Metro Link trains** - Contact: <http://metrolinktrains.com/> or 800-371-LINK

Keep in mind that the separately-operated Metrolink trains connect seamlessly with the Metro system, extending commuter rail service **500 miles through the five- county area** of Southern California.

➤ **Share the Ride** - Contact: <http://www.commutesmart.info/> or 1.800.COMMUTE

Southland carpoolers **save an average of 36 minutes per day** by using the region's more than 455 miles of freeway carpool lanes. Additionally, car and vanpoolers **share driving costs, reducing them by 50% or more** depending on the number of rideshare participants.

➤ **Split Your Trip** - Contact: <http://www.commutesmart.info/> or 1.800.COMMUTE

Drive less by using one of the county's **146 Park & Ride lots**. You can meet your carpool partner there, or simply catch an Express to major employment centers. Bike there and you'll burn calories while saving cash.

Have a safe and healthy fall season. Senator Alarcón's staff is eager to answer your questions. Please call us if we can be of service. Our District Office phone number is (818) 901-5588.



Reach Your Dream of Home Ownership

Some Californians are facing overwhelming obstacles when working to **reach their dream of home-ownership**. Skyrocketing home prices in Los Angeles makes it almost impossible for many people of low and moderate incomes to buy a house. In fact, the number of people in Los Angeles who own their own homes has dropped to crisis proportions. That's why State Senator Richard Alarcón makes it a priority to **help make it easier for working families to afford their own homes**.

- ✓ Senator Alarcón authored and passed legislation (SB 1656) that provided more than **\$500 Million for the creation of affordable housing**.
- ✓ That same bill created the **Cal Home Program** which provides down-payment assistance and loans for first time home buyers.
- ✓ The Cal Home Program also provides funding for programs like Habitat for Humanity so that they can **build more affordable housing**.

Help is also available locally. The City of Los Angeles Housing Department is offering **interest-free loans and grants to help qualifying home buyers bridge the gap** between what they can afford and the actual price of a house or condominium. If you are interested in the programs and want to see if you are qualified, you may go to the Department's website, www.cityofla.org/lahd